

decisions, decisions

When did air travel get so darn expensive? Maybe I was a bit spoiled living in Chicago and having the luxury of deciding between Midway and O'Hare every time I needed to book a flight. Now in Phoenix, I'm finding that budget-friendly flying is much harder to come by and that \$450 out of Sky Harbor International is a real steal for our next flight East for a friend's wedding.

Whether it's the price at the pump or a quick search on Travelocity, it doesn't take long to see that a trip to just about Anywhere USA isn't all that cheap anymore.

Since 2000, I'll bet that the way you budget for work-related travel has changed dramatically. Maybe you've crossed out certain events from your calendar, or maybe you go every other year now. Maybe in the past you traveled with an entourage of managers and buyers, but now you find yourself solo at most boarding gates or registration lines. Whatever it may be, your travel budget has probably taken a few voluntary (and involuntary) hits over the years. What are you doing to get yourself and your team back out there among peers, experts and new products?

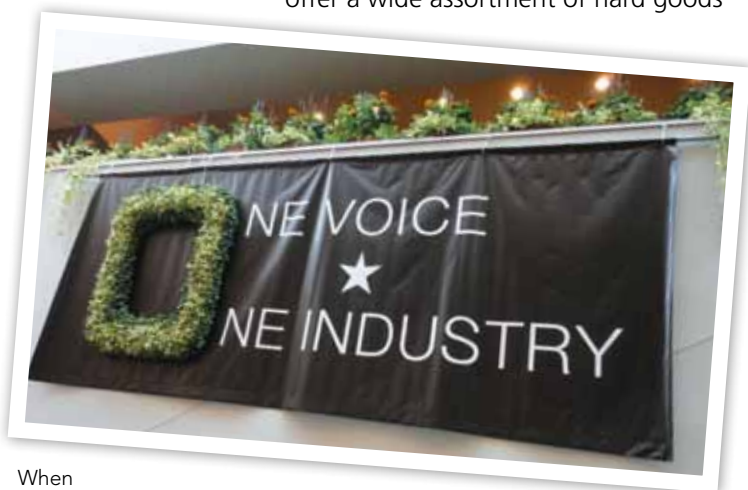
on your radar?

The other day I returned home from Columbus, Ohio, and OFA Short Course with a bit of pertinent news to pass along.

For 2014, Short Course plans to expand on its garden center retail offerings by adding a 50,000 square-foot exhibit hall.

In a recent press release, OFA/ANLA CEO Michael Geary said, "The reality is that for most retailers, plants can make up as much as

80 percent of annual sales. At Short Course, attendees can see new varieties and other plants that consumers want to buy. But it's not plants alone that retailers sell, so we also offer a wide assortment of hard goods



When OFA and ANLA combine, OFA/ANLA CEO Michael Geary says, a premier event will need to reflect the membership of both organizations and the industry.

and services to round out their inventory."

Kate Terrell, chair of OFA's Garden Center Committee and purchasing manager at Wallace's Garden Center in Bettendorf, Iowa, echoed Geary's message, "It's important that retailers and growers — the entire industry supply chain, in fact — be together under one roof. We can learn from each other and do business. Why segregate ourselves into separate events?"

So retailers — particularly those of you who have never attended Short Course — does this pique your interest? Does it earn the event a spot on your calendar the next time around?

From Chicago's IGC Show this month to Missouri's Wild Bird Expo in October and the multitude of regional and national events that seek your registration this fall and winter, it looks like you have a travel budget to set and some decisions to make. **LGR**



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